

for President Obama's willingness to express concern about my husband and the other imprisoned Americans in Iran during his recent phone conversation with Iran's new president, Hassan Rouhani, I was devastated to learn that the Administration didn't even ask for my husband's release when directly seated across the table from the leaders of the government that holds him captive. My husband is suffering because he is a Christian. He is suffering because he is an American. Yet, his own government at least the Executive and diplomatic representatives has abandoned him. Don't we owe it to him as a nation to stand up for his human rights, for his freedom?"

Secretary Kerry acknowledged that he had not done so—confirming the awful report that Naghmeh had already heard.

Pastor Abedini remains imprisoned in Iran, sharing a cell with violent criminals who have more than once surrounded Pastor Abedini as he tried to sleep, wielding knives and threatening his life.

Saeed Abedini is an American citizen. He went to Iran last year to build an orphanage for Iranian children. He had been arrested in Iran before, but released and told he could enter and exit the country for humanitarian aid work if he agreed to cease pastoring house churches.

As Pastor Abedini's wife, Naghmeh, testified last week, he accepted that proposal—but Iran did not uphold its end of the agreement.

Abedini was arrested in July 2012, imprisoned, and tried for sharing his religious beliefs and thereby supposedly undermining the security of Iran.

He was denied contact with his attorney until just before the trial. The trial was not public, and he and his attorney were barred from participating in key portions of the trial—following which a judge sentenced him to 8 years in prison. His appeals have been denied.

In prison, he has been repeatedly beaten, denied medical care, and held in solitary confinement. While nuclear talks played out on the world stage—Iran moved Pastor Abedini to a prison notorious for housing the worst criminals in Iran, Rajai Shahr.

The very fact that Pastor Abedini was moved to a dangerous prison in the middle of negotiations confirms that the Iranians recognized him as a potential factor in the negotiations. Since August of 2012, the United States has reportedly released four Iranians, including most recently a high-ranking scientist, who were imprisoned in the U.S. for sanctions violations.

Speaking for myself, I question whether these releases are unrelated to the nuclear talks.

Yet American citizen Saeed Abedini remains in a hell-hole prison in Iran.

The U.S. government must not waste another opportunity to secure the release of Pastor Abedini—his case needs to be front and center in the next round of U.S.-Iranian negotiations. Time is running out. Naghmeh, Rebecca, and Jacob need their husband and father home.

## ANNOUNCING RECIPIENTS OF THE 2013 CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN COMMENDATION FOR THE THIRD DISTRICT OF TEXAS

### HON. SAM JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 16, 2013*

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to honor fourteen distinguished military veterans, community servants, and American patriots who call the Third District of Texas home. All faithfully answered the call of duty and placed service above self for the sake of our great nation. Each one leaves a legacy to be remembered, for future generations to follow, a legacy of bravery, loyalty, dedication, and sacrifice. For their selfless service, bold leadership, and undying commitment for their neighbor and nation, the following individual has been selected as a recipient of the third annual Congressional Veteran Commendation:

Colonel Richard H. Graham served in the United States Air Force from 1964 to 1989. He entered pilot training at Craig Air Force Base in Alabama. Once he graduated he remained at Craig AFB as a T-37 instructor pilot and flight examiner. In 1970, Mr. Graham was assigned to the 555th Tactical Fighter Squadron at Udon Air Force Base in Thailand. During this time he flew 145 combat missions over North Vietnam and Laos in F-4C/D/E aircraft. He ended his military career honorably with more than 4,600 flying hours.

For his years of distinguished service, Mr. Graham received numerous decorations including a Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross with three Oak Leaf Clusters, Meritorious Service Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Air Medal with 18 Oak Leaf Clusters, and an Air Force Outstanding Unity Award with Valor.

Mr. Graham has continued to serve since his retirement from the military. He is actively involved in many charities and contributes his time and life experiences giving motivational speeches around the country. His main charitable work is through the four books he wrote on the SR-71. He donates the royalties from these books to aviation museums including the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum in D.C. and the Frontiers of Flight Museum in Dallas.

Colonel Richard Graham, let me both thank and congratulate you on your exceptional service to our country and community both past and present. It is my pleasure to award you the 2013 Congressional Veteran Commendation for the Third District of Texas.

### HONORING LINDA CRAYTON

### HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, December 16, 2013*

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the extraordinary career of Linda Crayton as we celebrate over 40 years of her dedicated service to the community and her wide reaching accomplishments. Ms. Crayton is an outstanding individual, who throughout her distinguished career has cham-

pioned public private partnerships, led efforts for gender equality, advocated for justice in her community, and supported our youth.

Ms. Crayton's esteemed career has spanned over four decades as an employee of Comcast, where she is currently the San Francisco Regional Senior Director of Government Relations. Along the way, she has been a staunch advocate for the advancement of women by leading efforts with Black Women Organized for Political Action, California Women Lead, EMERGE, Women In Cable and Telecommunications, and 100 Black Women of the Bay Area, Inc. Ms. Crayton has been recognized numerous times for her commitment to gender equality. The San Francisco League of Women Voters accorded Ms. Crayton "The Woman Who Could Be President" award in 2001. In 2006, she was named "Woman of the Year" for the 9th senatorial district by California State Senator and President Pro-Tempore Don Perata, as well as "Corporate Woman of the Year" by 100 Black Women, Inc. In 2011, Ms. Crayton was recognized by the National Women's History Month with a History Makers Award.

Among her many contributions, Ms. Crayton has tirelessly served her community and church as a civil rights leader. She has worked with the NAACP, Urban League, and countless other community justice organizations. She also supports the East Oakland Youth Development Center, Oakland Boys and Girls Club, and the Spanish Speaking Citizens Foundation. For her tremendous commitment to the community, she has been recognized by the San Francisco African American Chamber with a "Lifetime Achievement" award and by the National Association for Multi-ethnicity in Communications (NAMIC) as a Black History Month—Living Legend. In 2007, the Martin Luther King Jr. Civic Committee and the Bayview Hunters Point Family Resource Center further honored Ms. Crayton with a "Distinguished Community Service Award," and a "Humanitarian Award," respectively.

Moreover, Ms. Crayton boasts an impressive commitment to local government. In 1996, San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown first appointed her to the San Francisco Airports Commission, a role that she has been appointed to by successive San Francisco mayors continuously till this day. She has worked hard to ensure that San Francisco International Airport is the best run, cleanest, and most welcoming airport in the world.

Additionally, Ms. Crayton provided much needed support and leadership to the restructuring of the San Francisco Department of Health in her capacity as President of the San Francisco District V Mental Health Board. For these efforts she was recognized by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors with the prestigious Leadership Award.

Throughout her prolific career, Ms. Crayton has not only been a hardworking professional, but also a compassionate and generous individual. She has been a mentor for countless men and women throughout the years, taking them under her wing to help them grow professionally and pursue job opportunities.

Therefore, on behalf of California's 13th Congressional District, Ms. Linda Crayton, I salute you. Your many years of service have made an indelible mark in our community. Best wishes to you and your loved ones in the years to come.